

Report:

# Tech untapped

How to unlock efficiencies  
and thrive in a challenging year





# How you can achieve more with less in 2023

Decision makers now need new ways to achieve more with the same or less resources in 2023. So how can tech help your organisation?



**Jo Bertram**, *Managing Director,  
Business and Wholesale*

Technology has the power to unlock efficiencies across all our organisational touchpoints, from the way employees work together to how we interact with customers and citizens and how we handle time-consuming admin tasks.

But 2023 is proving to be [a balancing act](#) for many organisations. With the longer term effects of the pandemic, supply chain issues, the cost-of-living crisis and a battle for talent raging across industries, there's a litany of challenges faced by decision makers today.

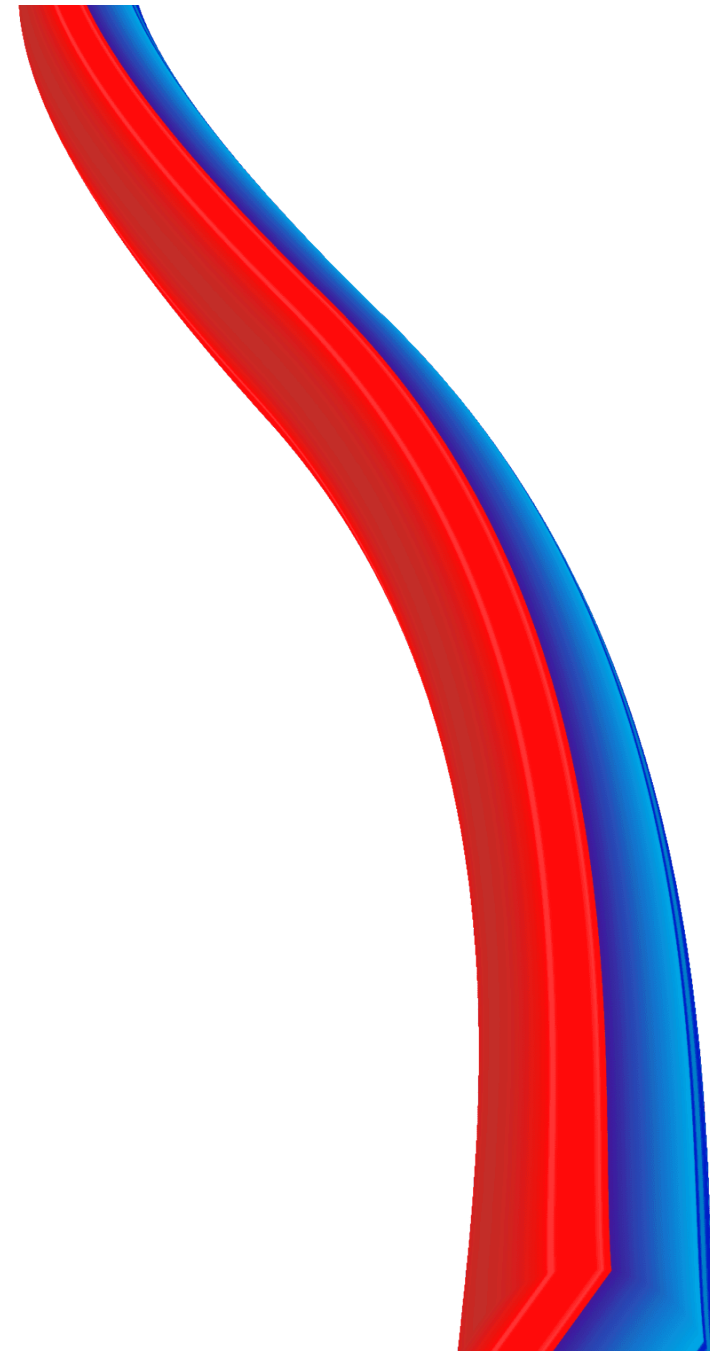
Times of difficulty are also ones of opportunity and a chance to challenge the status quo. I believe our team is our strongest asset, and I know I'm not alone in this

thinking among UK decision makers. If we succeed in 2023 it will be because of them.

We can't lose sight of the progress we've already made in transforming how we work. We must stay focused on the battle for talent, building digital skills, enhancing employee experiences and closing the digital divide. These factors will make all the difference to how successful we can be together beyond this year.

As this new research shows, maximising existing tech assets, investments and partnerships will be more important than ever in 2023.

Together we can help you make the most of what you already have, reach smarter tech investment choices and create better outcomes for customers, citizens and employees alike.





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## Purpose of this research

**We wanted to investigate what challenges organisations are most focused on in 2023 and how unlocking efficiencies through tech might help overcome some of these for our customers and partners.**

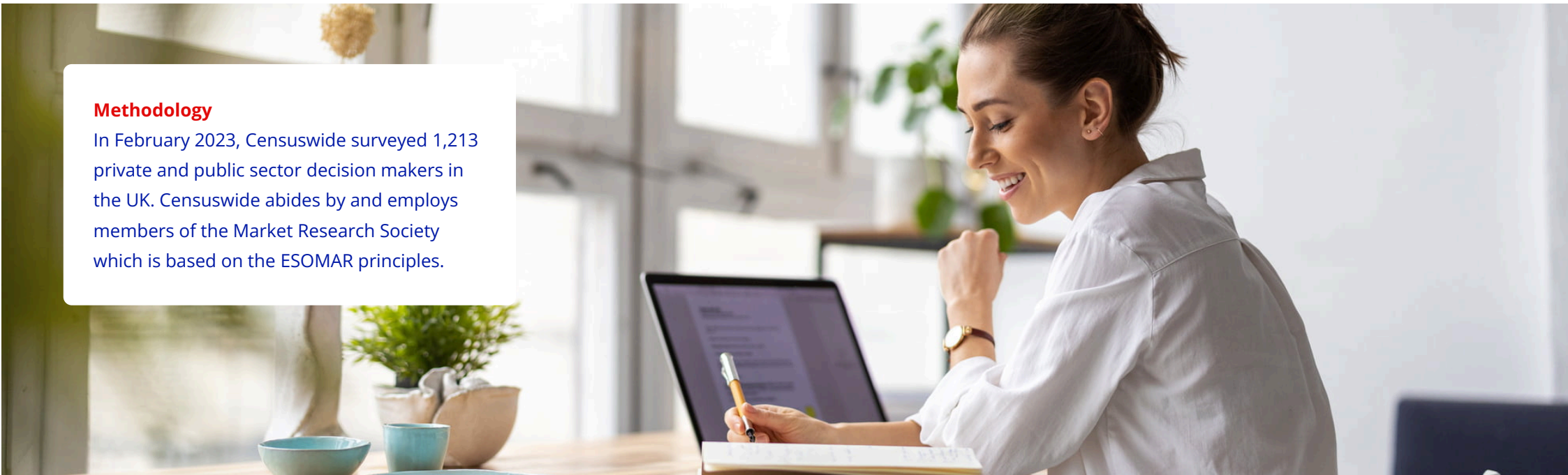
To get the facts straight, we partnered with Censuswide to survey over 1,200 public and private sector decision makers of companies with 11+ employees to understand:

- How equipped organisations are to meet the challenges of 2023
- The role of tech in creating efficiencies within an organisation – and, how it is helping (or hindering) productivity
- The role of partnerships in helping organisations unlock efficiencies

The report which follows will examine these findings through the lens of how they can help organisations like yours to thrive in 2023.

### Methodology

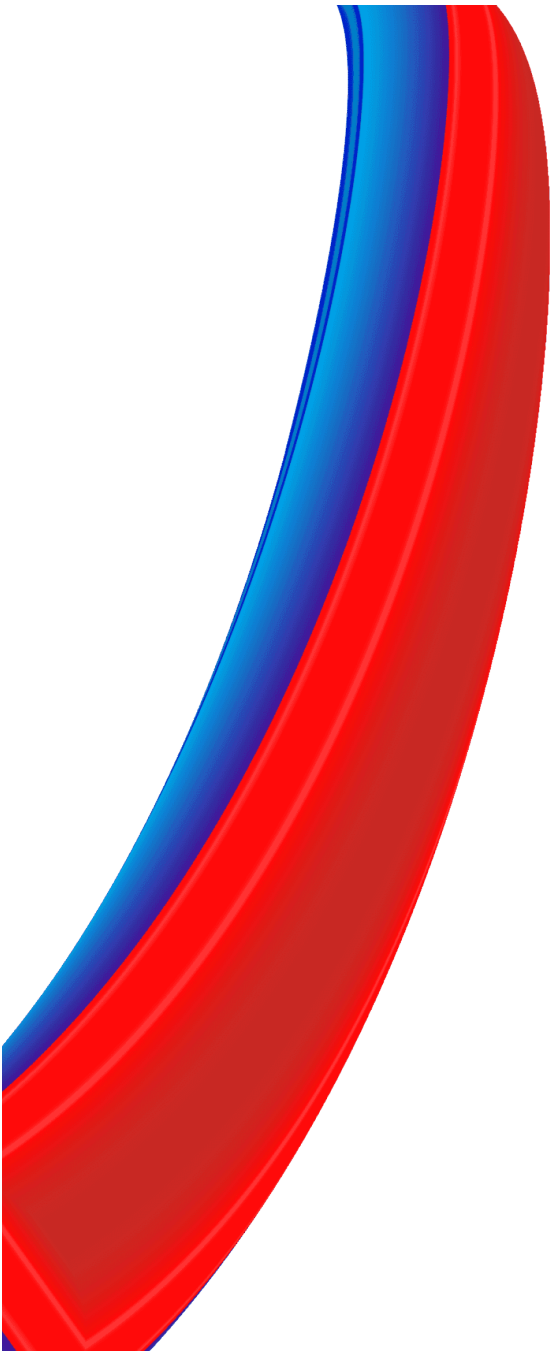
In February 2023, Censuswide surveyed 1,213 private and public sector decision makers in the UK. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.



# Key findings from our research

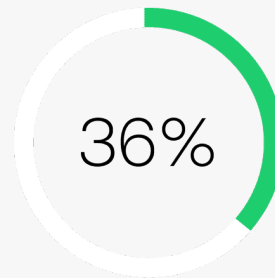
Check out the headline  
statistics from our research  
with Censuswide.



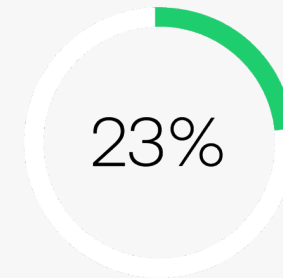


**92% of respondents agreed when considering factors such as the economic climate, organisational goals and ESG commitments, 2023 is set to be a balancing act for their organisation.**

The rising cost of doing business is front and centre of decision makers minds this year – topping both internal and external challenges:



of respondents said rising operational costs was the **most concerning internal challenge** for 2023

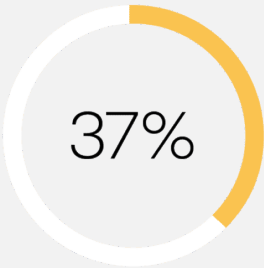


of respondents said the rising cost of doing business was the **most concerning external challenge** for 2023

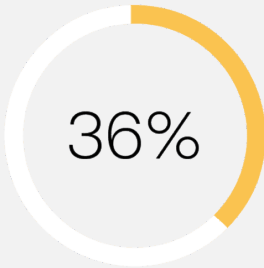


**In the face of 2023's balancing act, organisations are looking to get more value out of their existing investments.**

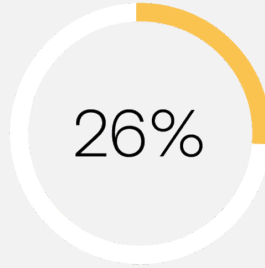
Asked what the most important operational priority for their organisation is currently:



of respondents chose  
**'increasing value efficiency  
of existing investments'**



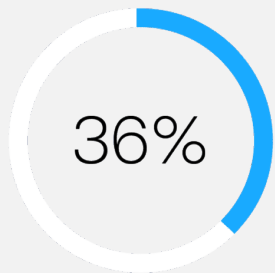
of respondents chose  
**'ensuring employee time is  
productive and efficient'**



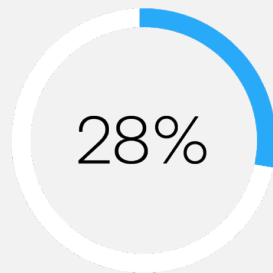
of respondents chose  
**'cost optimisation'**



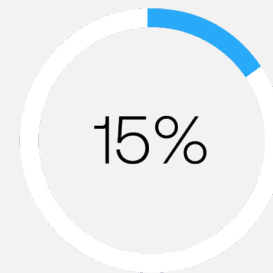
Among business leaders, decisions are being made on ambitions for the year ahead:



of respondents said **growth** is the main priority for their business strategy for the year ahead



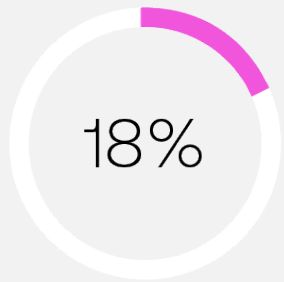
of respondents said **sustaining their current financial position** is the main priority for their business strategy for the year ahead



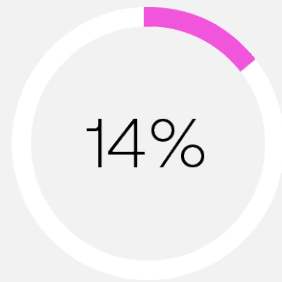
said **scaling back on costs** was their main priority for the year ahead

However, 72% of respondents said their legacy technology impacts their ability to operate efficiently.

A lack of digital skills and system incompatibility in particular are making it more difficult to operate efficiently:

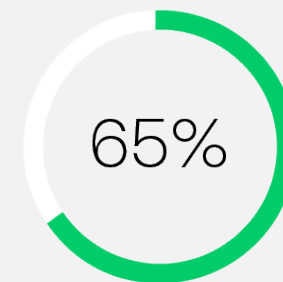


of respondents chose **user resistance or limited** digital skills



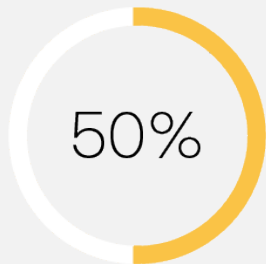
of respondents chose **incompatibility** between systems or applications

The pressure is on to demonstrate return on investment (ROI) for tech and connectivity investments faster than ever before:

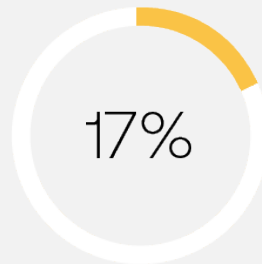


of respondents say they're expected to demonstrate **results quicker or far quicker** than six months ago

UK organisations have an opportunity to unlock efficiencies from their tech and connectivity investments to help them through this difficult period:

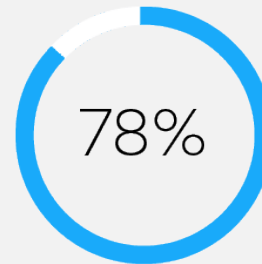


of respondents believe **less than half** of their team are currently using their communication and collaborations tools to their full capabilities

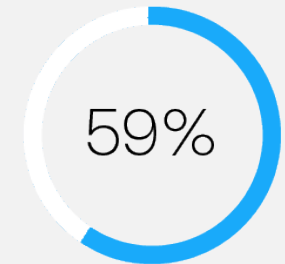


believe **between three quarters and the entire team** are currently using their tools to their full capabilities

Decision makers recognise the crucial role that IT teams and suppliers play. Organisations are relying on their IT suppliers to maximise the value of what they already have:



of respondents rely on their IT and telecoms provider to provide them with the consultancy to **maximise the value** of their legacy tech



of respondents speak to their IT function **at least once a week**, to discuss their needs and whether solutions are already in place

# Redefine your legacy

Legacy technology is holding back your organisation's ability to work effectively.

It's time to change that.



# Unlock the potential of your legacy tech

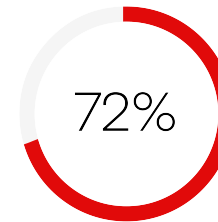
**Technology is meant to empower employees, create better customer experiences and redefine workplace processes to save time and money. But despite all this, it is still only a tool.**

And what happens when that tool is no longer fulfilling its role properly? If tech isn't creating positive outcomes, it's not much use to you and your team.

72% of our respondents believe legacy (old or outdated) technology is impacting their ability to operate efficiently.

In fact, our findings suggest those organisations with more employees tend to feel the impact of legacy tech on efficiency more acutely.

21% of those at organisations with more than 500 employees say it significantly impacted their ability to operate efficiently vs. 13% of those with 50-99 employees.



**72% of respondents say legacy tech impacts their ability to operate efficiently**

**“Using technology to its full extent doesn’t always need to be big, sweeping changes. There are little steps we can take to foster interest in tech. Once we do that, people will always go looking to learn more.”**

*Paula Eavis, Director of Human Resources, Bunzl UK*

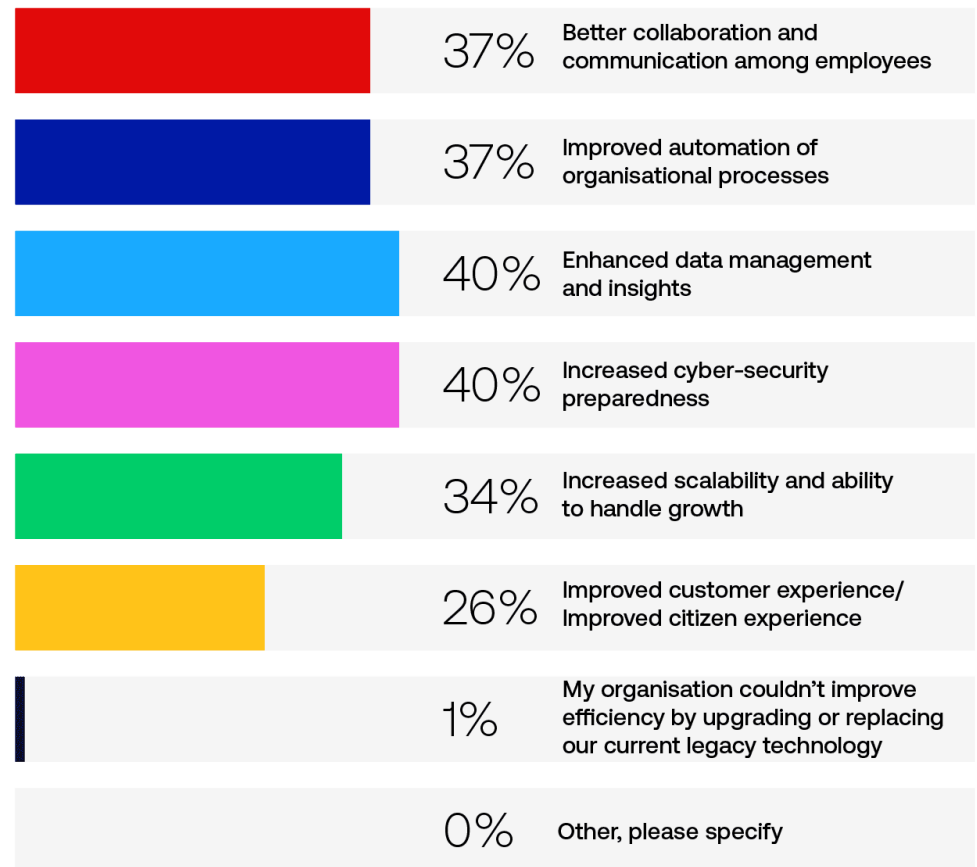


# There's more than one way to upgrade

**Almost every UK decision maker we surveyed believed they could improve their efficiency in some way by upgrading or replacing legacy tech.**

Interestingly the focus of this improvement was on the 'bread and butter' of digital transformation – collaboration and communication, improved automation of organisational processes, enhanced data management and insights, cybersecurity – anything that supports the day-to-day work of employees and protects income.

In what ways, if any, do you believe your organisation could improve efficiency by upgrading or replacing your current legacy technology?



As organisations strive to balance the challenges of 2023 with their ambitions, decision makers are looking for new ways to improve efficiency.

In times where cost efficiencies are less of a concern, this might be through investment in new equipment. But in 2023 not every organisation is able to invest in new technology. This may even be holding back the citizen experience in the public sector, as many decision makers are looking inwards to focus instead on time efficiency.

The public sector is notably more likely than the private sector to be significantly hindered by legacy technology (21% vs. 15%).



**Does your organisation have what it currently needs to maximise the use of its legacy technology?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Post answer**

**“We need to use the tools we already have to try and reduce the burden on staff and make their lives easier. That’s where technology lends itself to enabling efficiencies, in improving working life for our people.”**

**Graham Walsh**, Medical Director, Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network

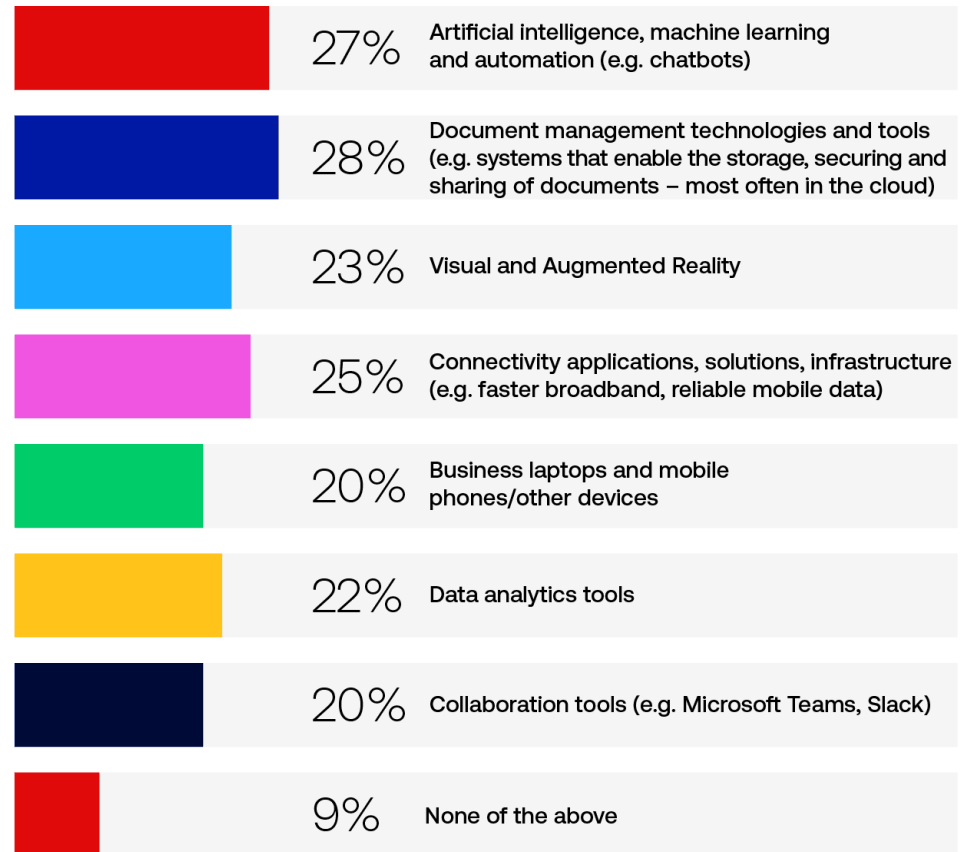
# Make investments with easily proven ROI

The cost of doing business means some organisations are looking to scale back investment. Yet our research predominantly found organisations were focused on cost-efficiency rather than cost-reduction.

Of those organisations which indicated areas where they may look to postpone investment due to cost concerns, the findings supported the above mentioned focus on the 'bread and butter', with a shift away from artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR).



Which of the following, if any, would you be most likely to postpone investment in due to cost concerns?





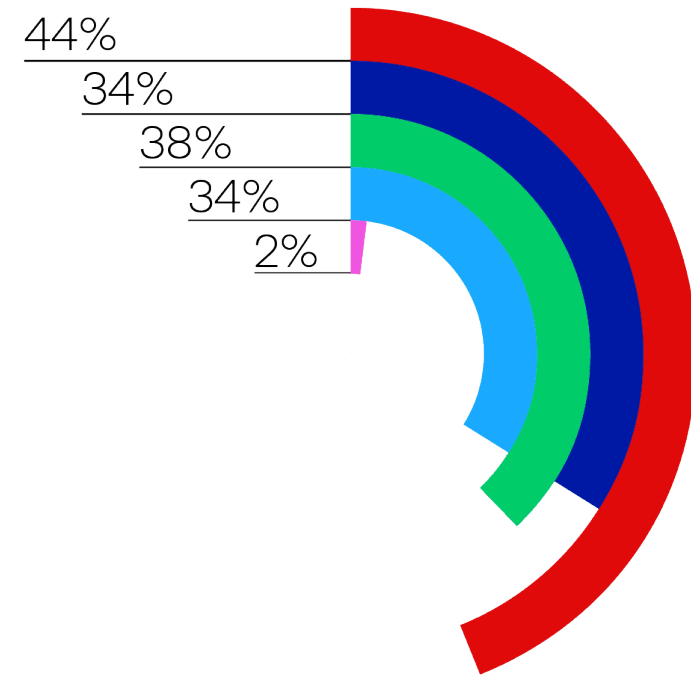
Despite tech being a means to an end, decision makers are reconsidering what this 'end' is in the face of 2023's balancing act.

Where previously tech and connectivity investment would primarily be used to improve customer and citizen satisfaction or employee satisfaction/retention, our research found long-term cost saving was the number one priority when evaluating tech and connectivity investment today.

That's not to say investment in cutting-edge new technologies like AI and AR are going away. The key word in the question posed to respondents is postpone rather than withdraw entirely.

Instead, 'safer' investments made today to protect and improve efficiencies will help to unlock opportunities tomorrow, where organisations can look to invest in other forms of transformational technology.

When evaluating tech and connectivity investment today, which of the following priorities are the most important, if any?



**"The ROI now is about more tangible business results like the acquisition of customers, using tech to enable that the accuracy or raising the business profile in a market sector. You know, if you're number three in a sector, does technology give you the leverage to become number two?"**

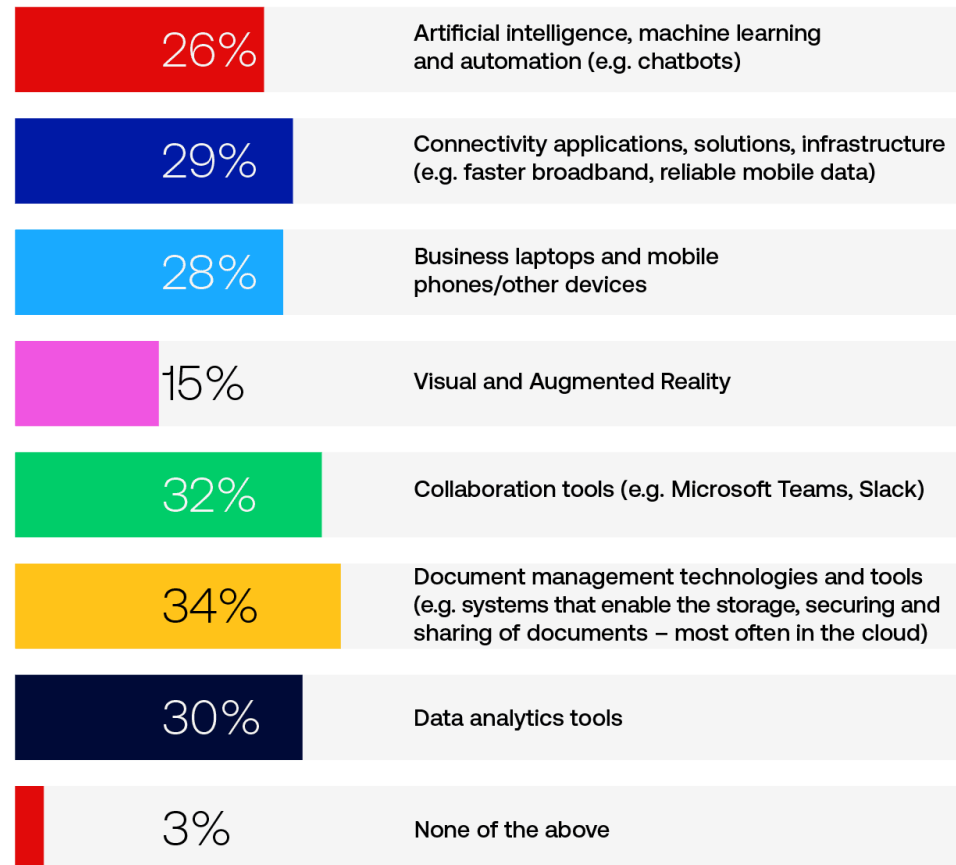
*Paula Eavis, Director of Human Resources, Bunzl UK*

- Long term cost savings
- Improving customer satisfaction and experience/Improving citizen satisfaction and experience
- Improving employee satisfaction/retention
- Creation of organisation-wide efficiencies
- None of the above

65% of respondents say they're expected to demonstrate return on investment quicker than six months ago. When it comes to investment for the year ahead, decision makers who are looking to spend are focused on those safer technologies, with document management tools, data analytics and connectivity applications all coming out high on the results.

Data analytics tools came out noticeably high for organisations with more than 500 employees at 36%, suggesting decision makers are looking to have greater oversight of their organisation (perhaps due to sheer size and numerous moving parts).

Which of the following, if any, have you been investing in 2022 and which of the following are you looking to invest in 2023, if any, to support the creation of business and operational efficiencies?



**Will your organisation be investing in new technology in 2023?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Post answer**



## Key takeaways:

- Evaluate your investments in 2023 to determine which can bring tangible value quickly and which can be postponed.
- Look to maximise the efficiency of your current legacy tech in two places:
  1. In your employees – from how they interact with their existing technology to their attitudes towards it, and their ability to use it.
  2. In collaboration and consultancy. Collaboration with your IT teams, and consultancy from your partners.



# Empower your employees to go further

Training is your skeleton key to unlocking efficiencies through tech.

# Empower your employees to unlock tech's full potential

Technology is a force to be reckoned with in the hands of an empowered employee. Tech and employee skills are intertwined, each one less effective without the other.

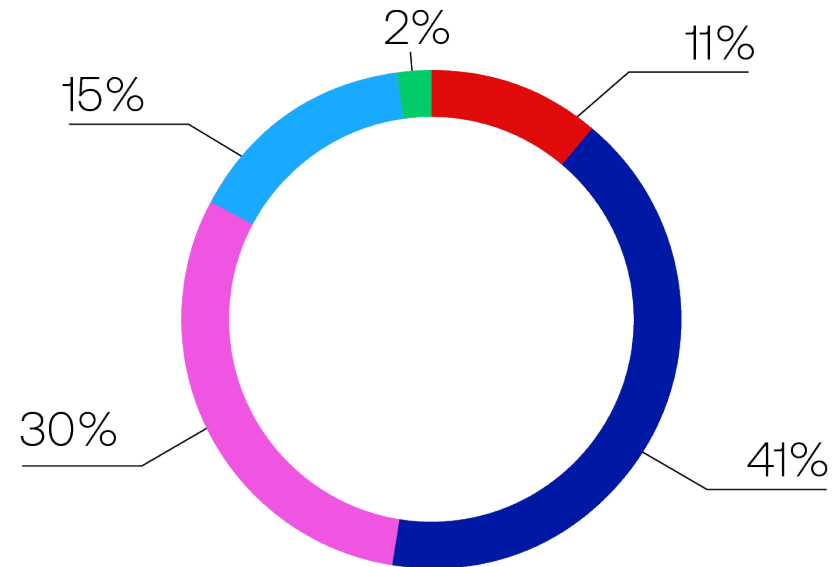
To get the most out of your legacy technology, you need your employees to be using the tech as efficiently as possible.

50% of leaders believe less than half of their team members are currently using unified communications and collaboration tools to their full extent.

**“Good technology, well used, creates efficiencies. It can remove those mundane routine tasks which chew up 20% of your time and allow you to focus on your core job. But also, from a wellbeing point, it gives people their time back.”**

*Will Richards, Workplace Deployment Director, ISS Facility Services UK*

To what extent, if at all, do you believe your teams use the full capabilities that unified communications and collaboration tools provide?



- Less than a quarter of the team are currently using it to its full capacity
- Between a quarter, but less than a half of the team are currently using it to its full capabilities
- Between a half, but less than three quarters of the team are currently using it to its full capabilities
- Between three quarters and the entire team are currently using it to its full capabilities
- N/A - My team doesn't have unified communications capabilities

At larger organisations we see a more efficient use of communication tools.

22% of respondents from companies with 500+ employees say between three quarters to all of their employees are using these tools to their full capabilities.

11% of public sector respondents believed their employees were using less than a quarter of the full capabilities of their unified communication and collaboration tools.

This inefficiency can often be seen down to an abundance of collaboration tools – Slack, Teams, Whatsapp, all competing with one another and dividing employee attention. The solution is to switch to a unified communications tool which not only streamlines processes but reduces pressure on your employees.

But it can also be down to a lack of training. The saying goes ‘a poor workman blames their tools’. But what if the workman in question hasn’t been taught how to use those tools properly?

**“You need to simplify your environment. It’s about making sure there’s a convergence of technology, a unified comms channel, to ensure you get a more uniform approach from staff.”**

*Paul Treacy, Principal ICT Infrastructure and Operations Consultant, Cabinet Office*



## Train to close the efficiency gap

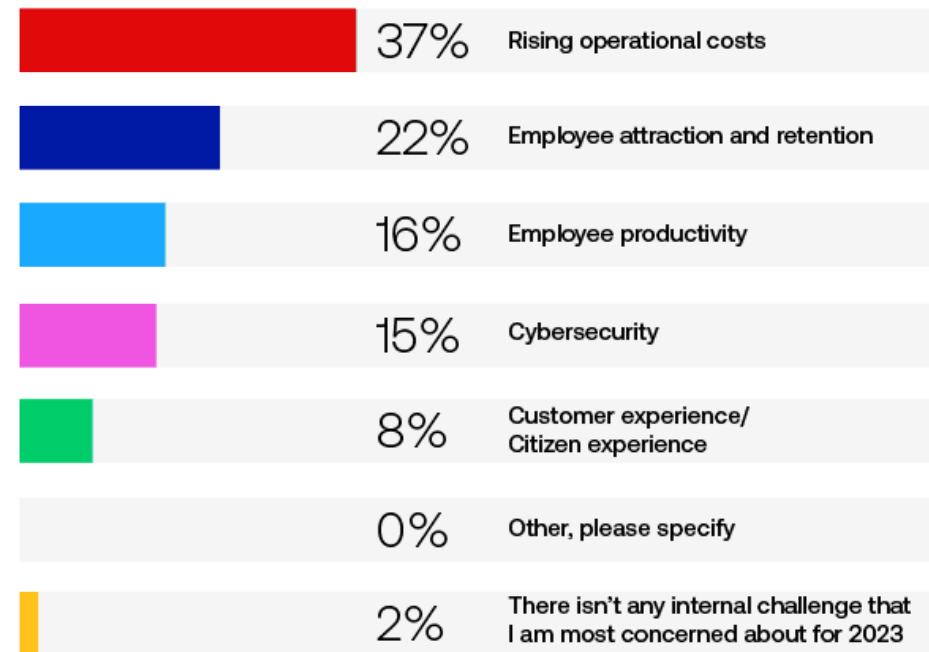
When we asked respondents what their biggest internal challenges were in 2023, employee attraction and retention and employee productivity were among the most prominent. The public sector was more likely than the private sector to report employee attraction and retention as the internal challenge they're most concerned about for 2023 (19% vs. 17%).

This is likely due to needing to compete with the pull of private sector salaries during a difficult time for government organisations.

**“There's a brain drain and a real concern about staff retention and staff wellbeing. We've got people saying, well, “I'm going to have to change roles and go to the private sector”. That's the biggest concern that faces us as a technical team.”**

*Paul Treacy, Principal ICT Infrastructure and Operations Consultant, Cabinet Office*

## What internal challenges are you most concerned about for 2023, if any?



Meanwhile digital skills are still an issue for some organisations.

18% of respondents told us that employee resistance to technology or limited digital skills within their organisation holds back their efficiency. This rises to 31% when we look at policing, where new technology can often come with a lack of training due to budgetary difficulties. As employee experience becomes more and more important, training must come first and foremost.

Indeed the digital skills gap sits at the very heart of the ongoing [battle for talent](#). Skilled workers are in exceptionally high demand, and for good reason.

While rising costs have risen to the forefront of organisations' concerns, the battle for talent isn't going away. Investing in your people is a sure-fire way to help tackle operational efficiencies and therefore costs.

After all, employees actively seek out training in their workplaces. 42% of employees would be more likely to stay in their current job if their employers provided more regular, intensive training on the use of digital technology, according to our [battle for talent](#) research.

Training won't just help you get the most out of your existing tech investments. It will also attract and retain top talent – talent that will be adept at getting the most out of technology.

**Does your organisation offer regular technology training to its employees?**

- Regularly
- Rarely
- Not at all

**Post answer**

**“Collaboration is all about making sure all your different applications work together. Most of the time people haven't yet got the skillset to do this properly. And many can be overwhelmed with the amount of tools available. If you don't have the clear direction on how each process works, then you become less productive, not more productive.”**

***Joe Di Fede, IT Director, ESG Limited***





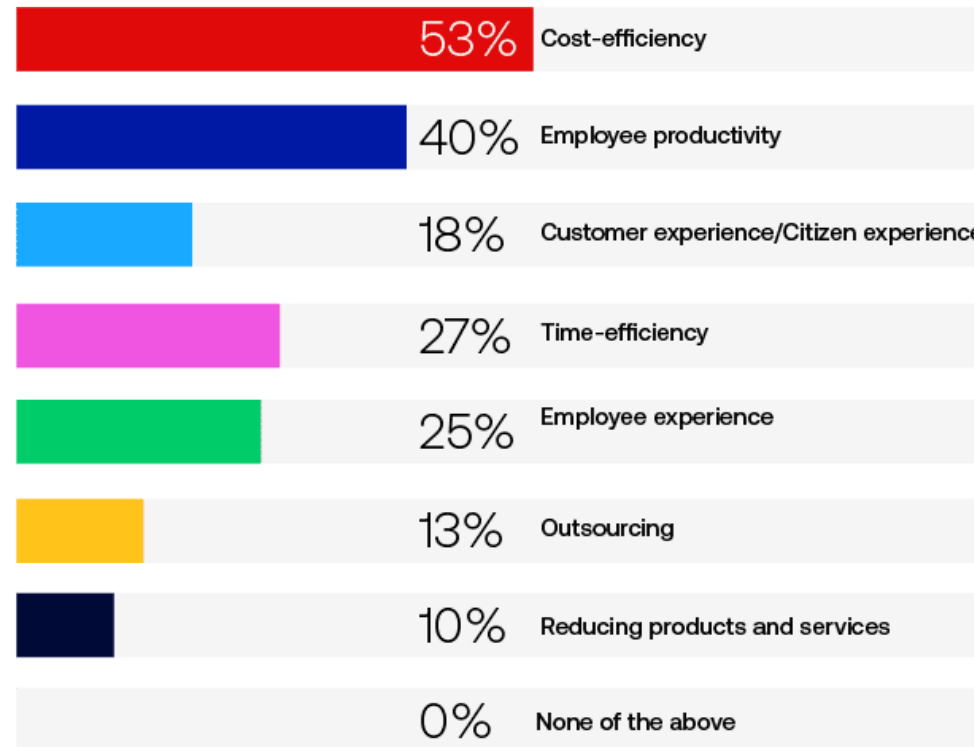
## Focus on recruitment and retention

Rising costs are not exclusive from spending time and energy on employee attraction and retention. UK decision makers deprioritising these crucial focuses will miss out on the opportunity to bring down their operational costs.

Yet employee experience is still languishing low down the priority list for decision makers. 22% selected employee experience as a focus for the year ahead.

Recruitment also seems to have become less of a focus. 10% said it was the external challenge they're most concerned about for 2023.

Which of the following operational focuses are the most important for the year ahead, if any?



At a time when costs are tight not just for organisations but for individuals, a focus on employee experience is a must-have. Empowering employees to work how and where they need to cannot be underestimated. We've seen extremely positive progress in this, yet there is still work to be done.

11% of respondents still have limited accessibility to remote work capabilities – more than three years on since this shift began. This figure rises to 24% in professional services, directly affecting employees who want or need to hybrid work.

While the hybrid working conversation has become less prominent in the media, it is now a core component of any organisation which wishes to create an empowering and productive workplace for its people.

**"Retaining and attracting talent is certainly a challenge. At times, you're having to maintain a service and develop new services at the same time as refreshing perhaps 25-30% of your workforce, who are doing work on assets everyone is relying on 24/7."**

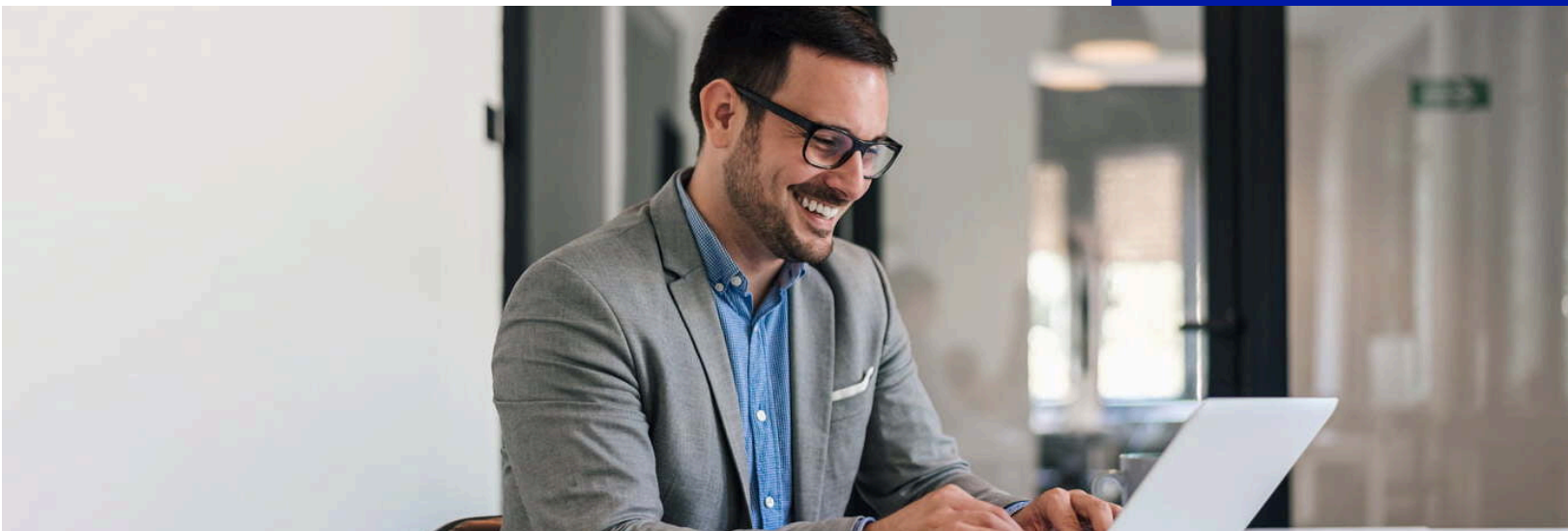
*Andrew Hunt, Director of ESG & Innovation, M Group Services*

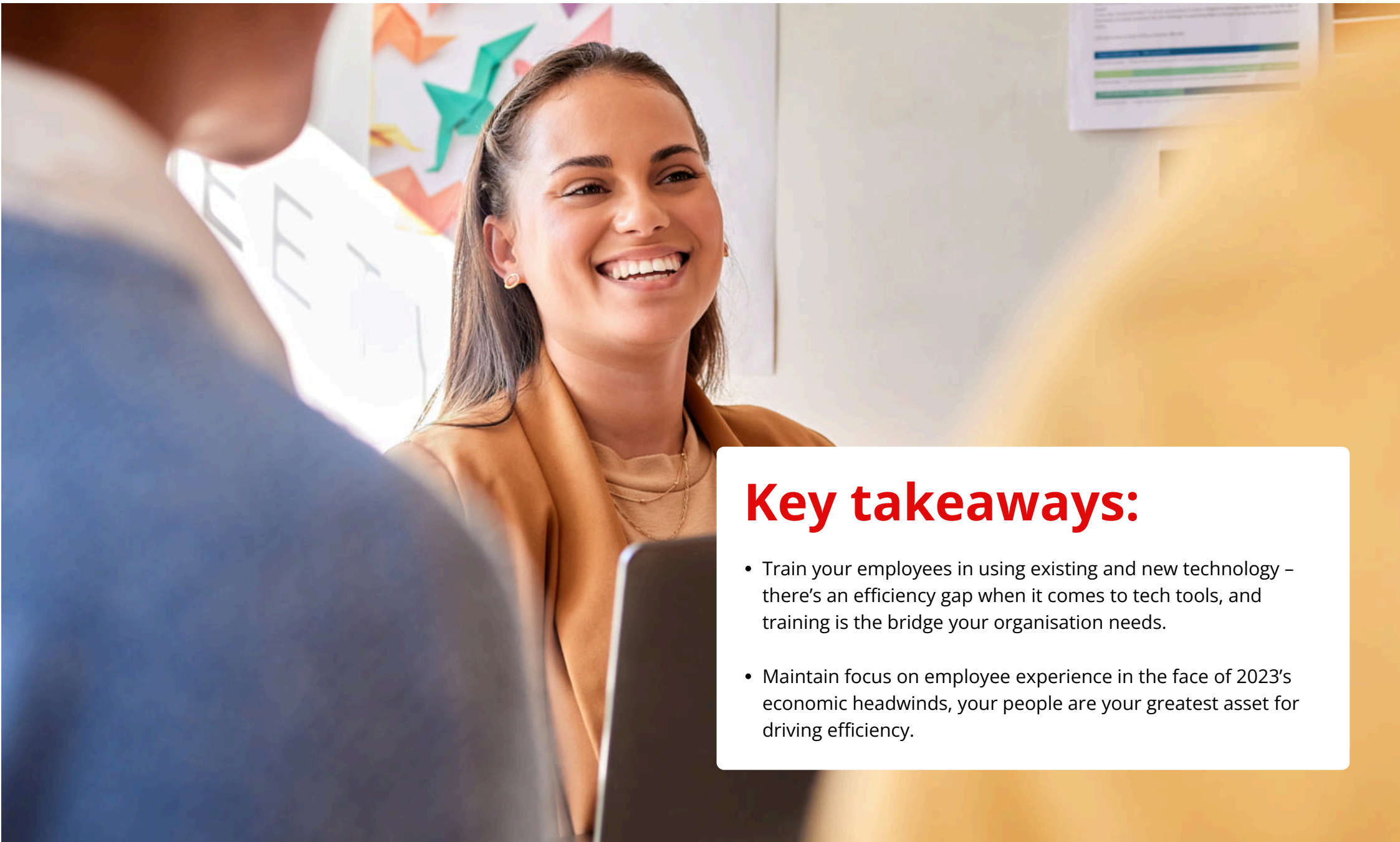
**Has the focus on employee experience at your organisation negatively shifted in the face of 2023's headwinds?**

Yes

No

**Post answer**





## Key takeaways:

- Train your employees in using existing and new technology – there's an efficiency gap when it comes to tech tools, and training is the bridge your organisation needs.
- Maintain focus on employee experience in the face of 2023's economic headwinds, your people are your greatest asset for driving efficiency.

# Challenge partners to achieve more

No organisation should be an island. And as our research shows, decision makers are more alert to the opportunities for efficiency through collaboration than ever.



# A challenge shared is a challenge halved

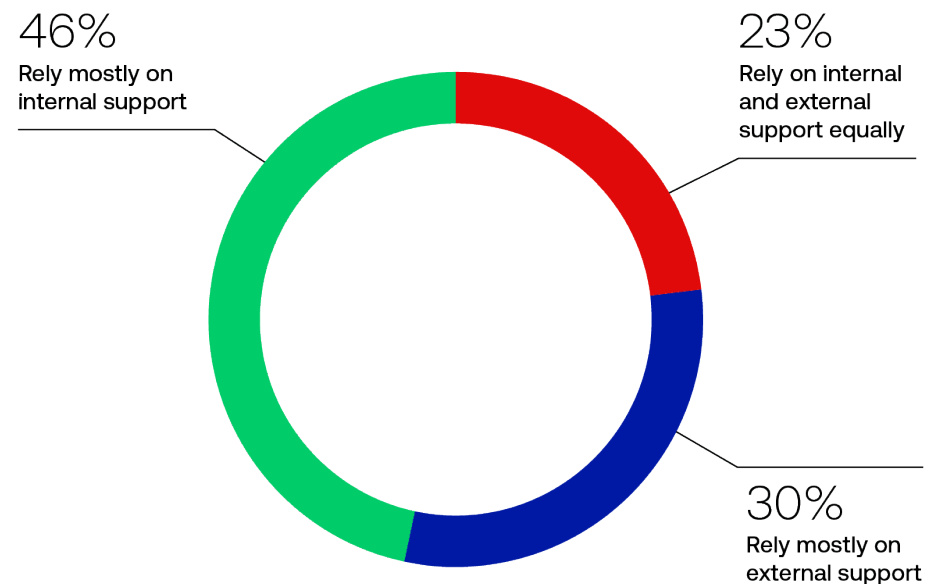
**Increasing value efficiency of existing investments. Ensuring employee time is productive. Focusing on growth, employee experience, and outsourcing – all of this is too much for any one individual.**

So as decision makers navigate 2023's balancing act, they're turning to the expertise of their IT functions and external partners for support.

78% of respondents rely on their IT and telecoms providers for consultancy on how to maximise the value of their legacy tech.

needs

To what extent do you rely on internal vs external IT support to help maximise the value of your legacy technology?

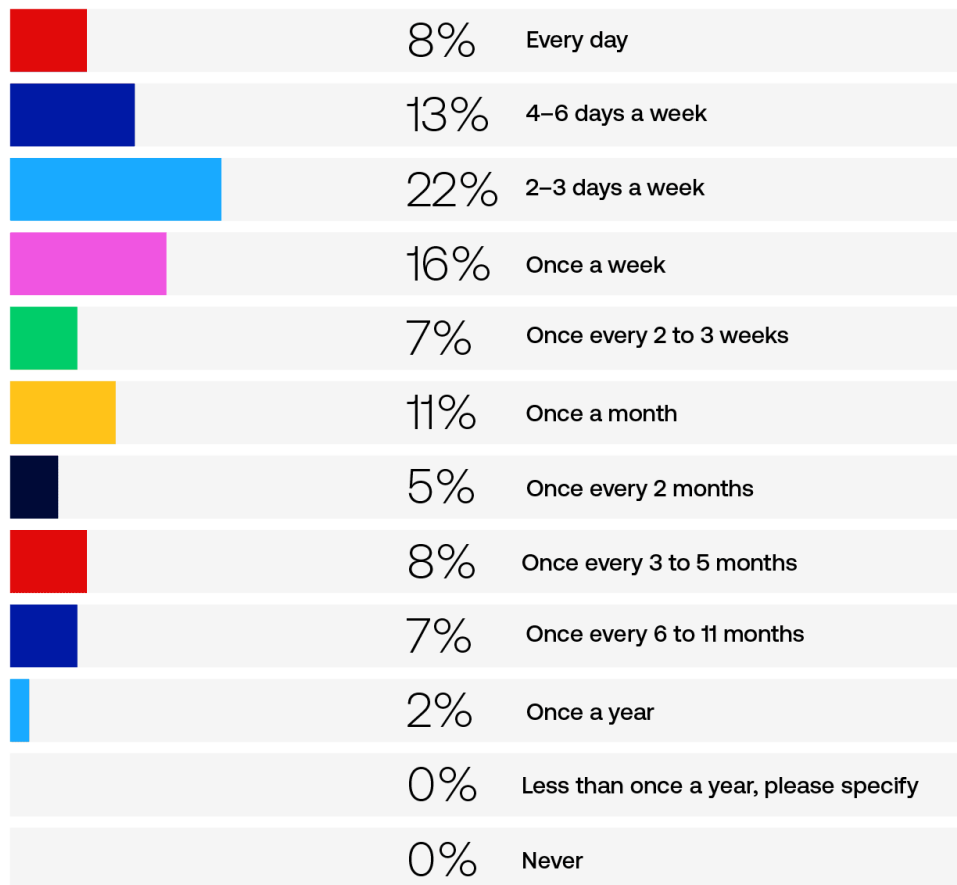


Collaboration with IT experts, be they internal or external, has risen sharply in the years since the pandemic. We're hearing first-hand how organisations are in more in-depth and frequent contact with their teams to understand their needs.

**"The level of collaboration between senior IT teams and the operational business has changed for the better. It's become far more interconnected."**

*Paula Eavis, Director of Human Resources, Bunzl UK*

## How often, if at all, do your departments speak to the organisation's IT functions to discuss their needs and whether solutions to their needs are already in place?



What's more, 59% of respondents told us they speak to their IT function to discuss their needs, and whether solutions to those needs are already in place, at least once a week. Across the board, more conversations are happening – and more often.

70% of respondents rated their external suppliers' IT and telecoms consultancy as 'good' or 'excellent' in helping them uncover new ways of working within their current connectivity setup.



**"We don't necessarily need to reduce the cost, but we need to get more value from what we have and discover the benefits of the technology that we've already got. How that can help the business to grow without financially having to grow the investment."**

*Graham Walsh, Medical Director, Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network*

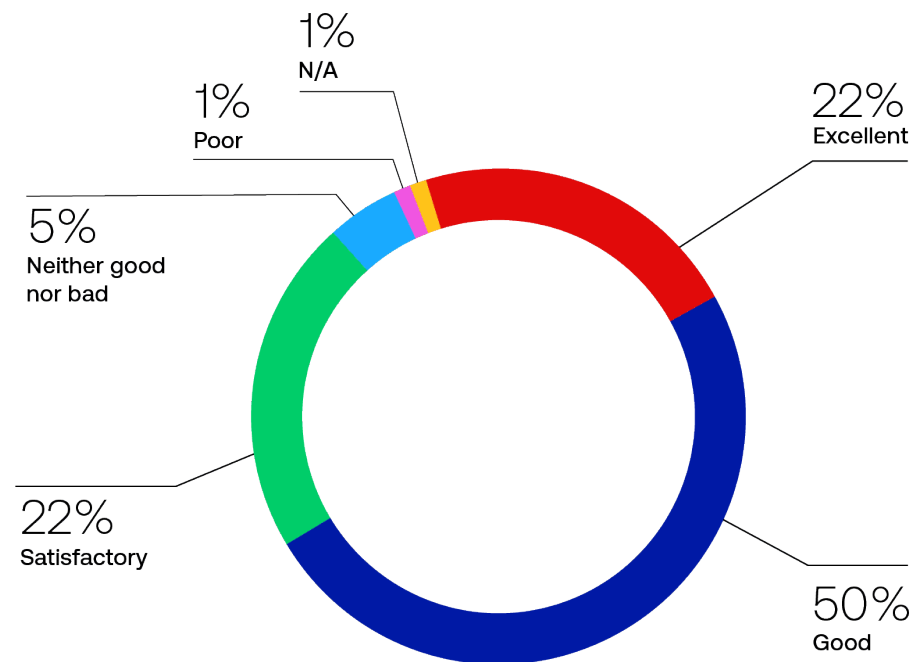
# Confidence in suppliers is soaring

As customers and partners work together more often and achieve greater success, overcoming the economic challenges of 2023 becomes a shared objective.

Commitments like our [Success Agreement](#) for large enterprises and public sector organisations are evidence of this, as is our [Get More](#) fund for small and medium businesses (11-249 employees) where we put 10% of the cost of your mobile and internet plan towards buying the latest tech for your team.

Already the confidence in this approach is showing.

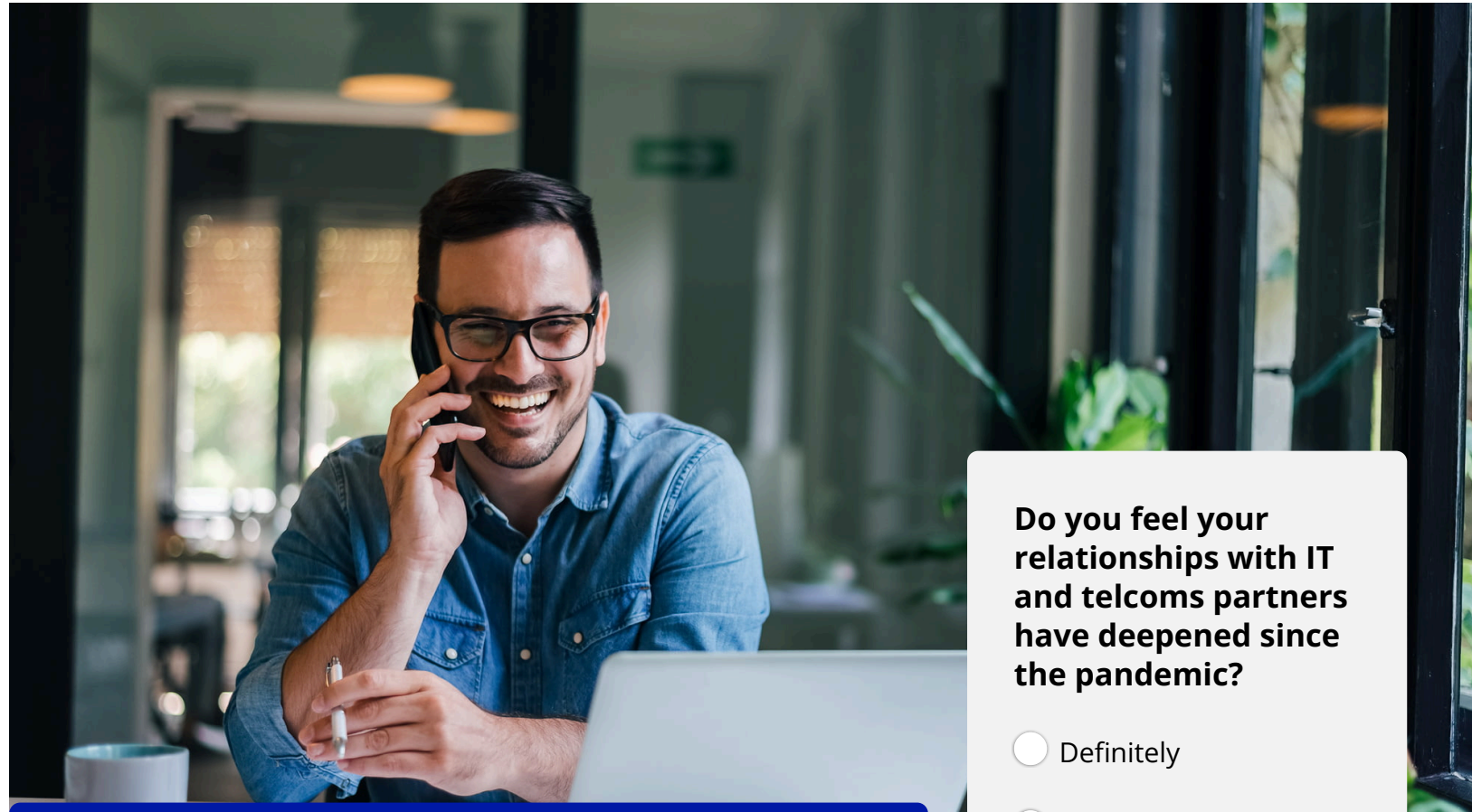
How well would you rate the IT and telecommunications consultancy you receive from your external suppliers and partners to uncover new ways of working within your current connectivity setup?



75% of respondents agree their IT and telecoms partner are rising to the economic challenges of 2023 to provide the consultancy their organisation needs to make smart tech investment choices.

The overall picture is positive. But there is still room for improvement and efficiency is all about attention to the finer details.

29% of health sector decision makers said their organisation currently suffers from poor connectivity. Small and medium business decision makers were less likely to rate their IT support as 'excellent' in helping them to uncover new ways of working, at 18%. And in policing 26% reported lack of support from digital suppliers and partners was the biggest barrier preventing them from achieving efficiency.



**"It's important to use your subject matter experts properly. It's about building partner relationships that aren't just calling someone when you need something, but keeping each other informed so that you're always on the same page."**

*Paul Treacy, Principal ICT Infrastructure and Operations Consultant, Cabinet Office*

**Do you feel your relationships with IT and telcoms partners have deepened since the pandemic?**

- Definitely
- Somewhat
- No

**Post answer**





## Key takeaways:

- [Challenge your IT and telecoms partners more](#) to share their expertise with you and your organisation.
- Find out where your partners could be pushing your organisation further – there may be untapped potential you're not aware of yet.



## What's next?

Doing more with the same or fewer resources will demand a fresh approach. Here are our top tips for driving business efficiencies through tech.

# Navigating 2023

“Look at how much tech empowers us to do the very basics in our private lives; shopping, banking, the things that make life a little bit easier. If we can replicate that in the workplace, then people are going to be in a better place for it.”

*Will Richards, Workplace  
Deployment Director, ISS Facility  
Services UK*



The opportunity to find efficiencies by untapping your tech’s potential is there for the taking. Decision makers have identified where these efficiencies can be made. So what now?

While 2023 will be a balancing act, we’re here to help you get the balance right. Here are the key areas where you can take decisive action today:

## Five key considerations for decision makers

1. **Evaluate** your investments in 2023 to determine which can bring tangible return on investment to your organisation quickest
2. **Focus** on the vital technologies – collaboration & management – which best support workplace efficiency
3. **Challenge** your IT and telecoms partners to use their expertise to help you achieve more with the tech and tools you already have
4. **Train** your employees in using existing and new technology – there’s an efficiency gap when it comes to tech tools and training is the bridge your organisation needs
5. **Maintain** focus on employee experience in the face of 2023’s economic headwinds – your people are your greatest asset for driving efficiency long term

**Ready to take the next step?**

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